



The **WATSON REPORT**

to the constituents of the 33rd Congressional District of California

AROUND OUR DISTRICT

Social Security Town Halls



I have heard from hundreds of 33rd District residents via regular mail, faxes, e-mail, and telephone calls regarding plans to privatize Social Security. I have met with many of you at town hall meetings held at West Angeles, SEIU local 660, Stonewall, and the Bethel A.M.E. I am working hard in Washington to ensure that Social Security remains viable.

Social Security was created over 70 years ago to provide seniors with retirement security. It is a guaranteed benefit and is not in immediate danger of becoming insolvent.

I oppose Social Security privatization for the following reasons:

- It will expose future retirees' life savings to an unpredictable stock market;
- It will reduce benefits for everyone, especially women and minorities;
- It will weaken Social Security disability and survivors' benefits;
- It will reduce retirement income due to increased administrative costs.

Social Security is one of our nation's most successful programs. I promise to continue to work tirelessly to save, strengthen, and secure it for future generations.

Combating Youth Violence



Congresswoman Watson meets with area high school students to discuss youth violence

I am very concerned about the growing level of youth and gang violence in our neighborhoods. In Los Angeles County, the use of semiautomatic handguns in gang-related killings has skyrocketed. 72% of school violence is attributed to gang activity, according to a National League of Cities' survey. The reach of gangs is now international in scope.

I have sought input from the residents of the 33rd Congressional District by holding a series of summits on youth violence. The first

summit, convened at the University of Southern California, included elected and law enforcement officials, community leaders and organizations, youth agencies, the clergy, and health professionals. The second summit, held at the FAME Renaissance Center, gathered student council members from Dorsey, Crenshaw, Los Angeles, Whitney Young, View Park, and Manuel Arts High Schools.

I plan to hold a number of additional youth violence summits in the upcoming months.

Visit Congresswoman Watson on the Web to learn about:

- *her upcoming events*
 - *her position on the issues*
 - *her statements & speeches*
- or to share your opinion, and to sign up to receive our electronic newsletter*
www.house.gov/watson

Marlton Square Development Breaks Ground

The redevelopment of Santa Barbara Plaza has been decades in the making. I have been working closely with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to secure additional funding needed to complete this important project.

Capital Vision Equities (CVE) is taking the lead in building a new mixed-use development on the site – renamed Marlton Square – that will include 180 units of senior housing, 140 single family homes, 150 residential condominium units, and 119,000 square feet of retail space.

Marlton Square is one of the largest urban redevelopment projects in the city of Los Angeles. It will be the cornerstone to revitalization of the Crenshaw corridor.



Marlton Square - Congresswoman Watson meets with (l-r) businessman Jerry Edwards, football star and Marlton Square investor Keyshawn Johnson, HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson, and CVE Developer Christopher Hammond to discuss ground breaking for the development.

Hollywood in Black & White

In honor of Black History Month, this past February I hosted an event and month-long exhibit entitled “Hollywood in Black and White.” at the Hollywood History Museum.

The awards program honored African-American entertainment luminaries from the 1930’s thru the 1960’s. The exhibit included original costumes, rare photographs of black entertainers, props, memorabilia, oral histories, and posters from the archives of Sony Pictures, MGM, Columbia Pictures, and Paramount Studios. Classic movies from the period were shown in the Museum’s screening room.

Both the Los Angeles and Culver City Unified School Districts participated in the historic exhibit by providing student tours.



Hollywood in Black & White - Congresswoman Watson and Donelle Dadigan, President & Founder of the Hollywood History Museum (Max Factor Building) discuss issues facing the entertainment industry

Crenshaw District Gun Dealer Shut Down



I am very concerned about the ready access of weapons to our youth. In January, I became aware of a firearms and ammunition dealer that had been illegally operating its business in the Leimert Park area near our public schools.

My office convened several meetings with the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) and the Los Angeles City Planning Department. We learned that the arms dealer had not obtained proper city

permits to operate the business. We also learned that the operation of the weapons shop did not comply with the City of Los Angeles’ Crenshaw Corridor Specific Plan.

In March, the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety determined that the arms dealer had not obtained proper permits to occupy the business in its current premise and issued an order for the arms dealer to vacate its premises.

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Legislative Highlights

I introduced the following legislation during the first session of the 109th Congress:

H.R. 504 – Ray Charles Post Office Building

Naming the Post Office at 4960 West Washington Boulevard in Los Angeles, California, the “Ray Charles Post Office Building.”

H.R. 603 – Rail Crossing Safety Act

Authorizes federal money for states and local governments to construct tunnels, bridges, and other means of separating rail tracks and roads in order to improve safety. It also calls for a federal study on the access of fire, police, and ambulance personnel to blocked highway-railroad grade crossings. My hope is the bill will help reduce accidents such as the Glendale Metrolink crash that killed ten people in January.

H.R. 2359 - Digital Television Accountability and Governance Enhancement Act of 2005

Requires owners of digital TV stations to broadcast a certain amount of programming that covers local civic affairs or qualifying local electoral affairs, independently or locally produced programming, and children’s educational programming. Requires station owners to hold at least two public hearings annually to ascertain community needs and interests.

H.R. 1279 - Gang Violence Bill Amendments

Amendment to require the Attorney General to seek input from local elected officials before designating an area as a “High-Intensity Interstate Gang Activity Area.”

Amendment to add 100 new inspectors and 100 new agents to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives to be assigned to high-intensity gang areas. New inspectors and agents will help the Bureau of Alcohol, Firearms, Tobacco, and Explosives to keep illegal guns out of the hands of gangs and off our streets.

H.R. 2601- Foreign Relations Bill Amendments

Amendment to make it the policy of the U.S. Government to put Charles Taylor, former President of the Republic of Liberia, on trial for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Charles Taylor is responsible for some of the most horrific violence in West Africa, yet today he lives in a seaside villa. Bringing him to justice is necessary to move West Africa beyond war and toward a better future.

Amendment to allocate \$5 million to the Department of State to improve copyright enforcement in developing countries. Foreign movie piracy costs Hollywood billions of dollars every year. The amendment will help protect jobs here at home in the entertainment industry.

How I voted on key legislation:

Bill	Vote
Energy Policy Act of 2005	No. It fails to address our nation’s growing dependence on foreign oil and provides unnecessary subsidies to the energy industry.
Central American Free Trade Agreement	No. It fails to provide adequate labor protections to U.S. workers.
Anti-Gang Bill	Yes. It assigns more inspectors and agents to designated high-intensity gang activity areas.
Budget Act	No. It cuts farm, student loan, and pension programs, and spends down the Social Security trust fund.
Real ID Act	No. It addresses complex immigration-related issues that should be considered in the broader context of immigration reform. Places new and expensive unfunded mandates on states.

Rep. Watson Inspects Tsunami-Ravaged Region

As part of my responsibilities as a member of the International Affairs Committee, I accompanied a congressional delegation to the tsunami stricken countries of Sri Lanka, India, and Bangladesh. The widespread devastation I witnessed first-hand and the number left dead underscore the global impact of the disaster.

In each country, the delegation witnessed wide swaths of land where all life, including flora and fauna, had been wiped off the face of the earth. The geography of islands had literally been rearranged. Everywhere we went, we saw families seeking their loved ones, many sitting in piles of rubble, hopeless and helpless.

California is not a stranger to tsunamis. Since 1812, the California coast has been hit with 14 tsunamis; six were destructive. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, located in Hawaii, provides early warnings of tsunamis to most countries in the Pacific Basin. A similar early



Congresswoman Watson oversees the delivery of emergency aid to tsunami victims in Sri Lanka.

warning center does not exist for countries that border the Indian Ocean. Legislation passed by Congress earlier this year will assist Asian nations in establishing a tsunami early warning system so that such a disaster of catastrophic proportions may be averted.

I also traveled to the Darfur region of Sudan with a Congressional delegation that included Don Cheadle of *Hotel Rwanda* fame. Today an estimated 1.8 million people have fled their homes in Darfur and more than 70,000 have died. Aid groups estimate that as many as 1,000 people are dying from hunger on a weekly basis. What I witnessed is one of the clearest cases of ethnic cleansing.

I have personally called on Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to put Darfur squarely on the front burner of the administration's foreign policy initiatives.

Transportation funding for the 33rd

Los Angeles is again ranked as the most congested city in America, with congestion delays and costs twice the national average. The cost in traffic delays is over \$11 billion annually.

Thankfully, Congress has finally acted to address our transportation crisis by passing a long overdue major funding bill for road and transit projects across the nation. I am pleased that I was able to secure funding for many critical projects in the 33rd Congressional District. Among them are:

- \$7,129,408.00 for Bus Rapid Transit along Crenshaw Boulevard;
- \$2,192,000.00 to Widen & Reconfigure Sepulveda & Culver Boulevards in Culver City;
- \$1,600,000.00 to enhance the pedestrian environment and increase safety along Olympic Blvd. between Vermont and Western Avenues;
- \$3,093,200.00 for Culver City Bus Lines to switch to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses;
- \$25,600.00 for First Responder Signal upgrades in Culver City.

Ray Charles Post Office Dedication

President Bush has signed into law a bill to rename a U.S. postal facility building near downtown Los Angeles in honor of legendary singer Ray Charles.

Ray Charles, who passed away on June 10, 2004, at age 73, was a giant among artistic giants. The renaming of the postal facility, located at

4960 West Washington Blvd., will commemorate one of the true legends of popular music. It is my hope that the Ray Charles Post Office will be the first of many posthumous honors for this great American treasure. Ray Charles was a long-time resident of the 33rd Congressional District. The newly named postal facility is located near Charles's famed recording studio.

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